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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004775

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL IZ UN

SUBJECT: UNSRSG QAZI ON ARAB LEAGUE CAIRO PREPCON

REF: CAIRO 8785

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (U) This is an action request. Please see para 8.

¶12. (C) SUMMARY. On November 25, Ambassador met with UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ashraf Qazi and Deputy SRSG Michael von der Schulenberg to discuss follow-on actions for the Arab League Conference on the Iraqi National Accord, December 15 election preparations, and possible UN participation in international investigations of the MOI "Bunker" facility. Qazi and Ambassador agreed to explore ways the UN and the U.S. jointly can suggest outcomes for the Constitution Review Committee once the new government and National Assembly are in place. END SUMMARY.

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Qazi Positive on Arab League Prepcon  
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¶13. (C) UNSRSG Ashraf Qazi told Ambassador on November 25 that the Cairo Arab League Iraq National Accord Prepcon marked a positive step forward in Iraq's political development, with outcomes that "everyone can complain about." Qazi pointed to the participation of a wide variety of Iraqi players (including Harith al-Dari, President Talabani, and Sheikh Hammoudi) who had not come together before in a political meeting to discuss Iraq. Qazi said that the conference will move Iraq's political process forward with confidence building measures and plans for two follow-on committees. Qazi defended the prepcon's final statement, noting that its final declaration affirmed UNSCRs 1546 and 1637 and provided no new timetables or commitments on withdrawal. Ambassador noted that President Talabani had expressed similar sentiments to him the previous night (septel).

¶14. (C) Qazi said that Moussa was worried that the conference would collapse. As a result, Qazi noted, Moussa may have settled for the most generally acceptable confidence building measures, which included general statements on the elections and prisoners. However, Qazi said, Moussa played his position well and, despite some walkouts, the conference was a success. Qazi reported that at first Jafari appeared nervous during the prepcon and delayed his meeting with President Mubarak for thirty minutes as he reconsidered his attendance. Qazi said that Moussa threatened to embarrass Jafari (whom Moussa believed had an eye on the December elections) with public acknowledgment of his non-attendance. Qazi maintained the UN's neutral position at the conference, refusing at one point to take the chair from Amre Moussa when the SYG had to leave. Stressing this neutral role, Qazi stated that he still would consider convening a follow-on meeting.

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Conference Objectives  
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¶15. (C) Qazi said there would be two committees created to "concretize" follow-on activities. Although details were not finalized, one committee led by Former Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Ismael will take the lead on conference planning (Ref A). Lakhdar Brahimi is proposing a regional "Six plus Two" conference to buttress support from Iraq's neighbors. Alternatively, Qazi and the Ambassador discussed the UN envoy convening a meeting of representatives in Iraq to encourage follow-on from the prepcon within the country. Expressing a preference for the latter, Ambassador noted that the conference could encourage Arab states to send ambassadors to Iraq as well as ensure that follow-on actions for the conference are pursued.

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December Elections/Constitution  
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¶16. (C) Ambassador encouraged Qazi, the UN, and the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) to do all they can to make the December elections as transparent and secure as possible. Responding that the UN is unable to alter the IECI's composition, Qazi said the UN would do all it can to ensure international observers are present at polling stations. Schulenberg said that he is hopeful that the EU will send an observer mission to Iraq for the elections but added that it may not happen unless Kofi Annan

raises the issue with the EU. Ambassador agreed to ask USUN to raise this issue. Noting that the UK is reluctant to use its EU presidency as a vehicle for Iraq, Schulenberg said he hopes Austria's assumption of the EU presidency will allow the EU to play a more active role in Iraq. Ambassador noted that several Sunnis have expressed to him concerns about the role of militias and security for polling stations. Ambassador and Qazi agreed to think of ways they jointly could help to speed government formation after the December elections and to establish common goals for the constitution's review.

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Bunker Investigation  
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17. (C) Ambassador said that he was meeting with PM Jafari later on November 25 to follow up on the investigation of the abuses at the MOI "Bunker." Ambassador said he encouraged MinInterior Jabr to set up two investigations, one on the Bunker itself and a second to look at declared and undeclared detention facilities. Ambassador said that it is likely the committee designated by the PM to investigate MOI detention centers will make unannounced visits to these sites, and then he asked that the UN consider participating in the investigation. Qazi said he welcomes the idea and that as long as the Iraqis accepted their role the UN would participate.

18. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST. Embassy Baghdad requests that Department please authorize USEU to raise with the EU the issue of sending an observer mission to Iraq for the December 15 election. Also, please authorize USUN to convey to appropriate officials that SYG Annan should raise the issue with the EU. END ACTION REQUEST.

KHALILZAD